



ANNUAL REPORT

TO THE

HALTWHISTLE

RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

For the Year ending

31st December, 1937.

BY

J. M. GLASSE, M.B., Ch. B., (Edin.)

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.



To the Chairman and Members of the Haltwhistle Rural District Council.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit my Annual Report for 1937. Although the Tabulated Statistics have not arrived from the General Registrar's Office, I do not think there will be much need for adjustment.

I thank the Sanitary Inspector (Mr. F. J. Lawson), the Registrar (Mr. C. E. Wilson) and the Clerk (Mr. Thomas Dryden) for assistance with the statistical matter included in the Report.

It has been a most strenuous year for the New Council, tackling the accumulation of work connected with Housing, Sewerage and Water. Their efforts to clean up the "Augean Stable" deserve to be crowned by success.

I sincerely thank this Council for the help they have given me in Sanitary matters and for the courtesy and forbearance they have extended to me at all times.

The Area of the Haltwhistle Rural District is 96,333 acres.

The estimated Population for 1937 is 8,055.

The number of inhabited houses at the end of 1937 was 2,284.

The sum represented by one penny rate is £145 11s. 4d.

The Rateable Value equals £37,591.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

The District is mostly Agricultural, although a few Landsale Collieries continue to exist. One of the latest out north "The Ventners Hall Colliery Company" deserve every help and the best of luck for the excellent road they have made to their Colliery, which is a step towards linking Haltwhistle with Wark and opening up that wild boggy land beyond the Roman Wall.

Mr. Walton Maughan, although in indifferent health due to War Service with the Tank Corps, continues his propaganda from Holmfirth, Yorks. His Scheme to link up Tyne and Solway by Canal appeals to many of us, owing to its immense possibilities. There is no doubt, ample coal and other valuable minerals en route, and Haltwhistle might become another Billingham.

When there is so much coal in the district, it is damnable that a whole community of coal miners, as at Haltwhistle, should be put on the scrap heap through no fault of their own. They are gradually losing their independent spirit and, like the old dogs of war, have not only lost their teeth but have even ceased to bark. Depression, through lack of employment, has proved too much for many—they have lost hope and ceased to try. The loss of the verile, level-headed Northumbrian Collier is a distinct loss to the country.

VITAL STATISTICS.

The Birth Rate is 10.8 as compared with 14.4 per 1,000 for the previous year.

Legitimate	82	Males	41	Females	41
Illegitimate	5	Males	5	Females	—
Still Births	—	Males	—	Females	—

The Death Rate is 16.3 per 1,000 population compared with 14.4 for the previous year :—

119 Deaths	54 Males	65 Females
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Of these, half of them were over seventy years of age and thirty-one were over eighty.

The Infantile Mortality for children under one year is the same as the previous year : 5 deaths—1 male, 4 females.

TUBERCULOSIS.

Five deaths from Tuberculosis as compared with ten the previous year :

Pulmonary Tuberculosis			Non-pulmonary Tuberculosis		
	M.	F.		M.	F.
Ages	27	24	...	—	—
	—	37	...	—	—
	—	37	...	—	—
	—	52	...	—	—
	—	62	...	—	—
	1	4		0	0

A Total of Five Deaths.

CANCER.

An increase of six deaths over the previous year :
Males 3 Females 10 A total of 13 deaths.

CAUSES OF DEATH.

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	M	F	Total
Diphtheria 	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever 	—	—	—
Influenza 	1	1	2
Tuberculosis (Respiratory) ...	1	4	5
Tuberculosis (Other Forms) ...	—	—	—
Cancer 	3	10	13
Diabetes Mellitus 	1	1	2
Cerebral Haemorrhage 	3	11	14
Heart Disease 	12	9	21
Arterio Sclerosis 	9	16	25
Other Circulatory Diseases ...	2	2	4
Bronchitis 	1	2	3
Pneumonias (all forms) 	2	2	4
Other Respiratory Diseases ...	3	—	3
Appendicitis 	—	—	—
Enlarged Prostate 	4	—	4
Cirrhosis of Liver 	—	—	—
Cholecystitis and Gall Stones ...	—	1	1
Duodenal Ulcer 	1	—	1
Nephritis 	—	1	1
Puerperal Causes (not P.F.) ...	—	—	—
Premature Birth, Congenital Debility, Malformation, etc. 	2	4	6
Suicide 	—	—	—
Other Violence 	2	2	4
Other Undefined Diseases ...	3	3	6
	—	—	—
Totals	50	69	119

SCAVENGING.

This is carried out by contract for the town and is under the supervision of the Sanitary Inspector. Bins continue to be substituted for Ashpits. Difficulty in the removal of refuse is often experienced in the small hamlets, and, with a view to eliminating this source of nuisance, the Council have been considering the question of collecting the refuse from the principal villages in the Union.

SLAUGHTER HOUSES.

There are Six Slaughter Houses in the District, all privately owned. An Abattoir would be more up-to-date.

SMOKE NUISANCE.

This being principally an agricultural district there is now no smoke nuisance.

WATER and WATER SCHEMES.

No improvement has as yet been effected to the villages which are in need of an augmented supply. I propose to include a short history of the Water Schemes, as I think it necessary the public should realize the difficulties which have faced you as a Council. The delay concerns us all and I hope the Engineers will soon resolve on a practical and economical Scheme. I am alarmed at the continued lack of protection of our present Water Supplies.

Water Schemes.

It will be about five years since members of the previous Council and your Clerk discussed with Mr. Wake, the lessor, the question of adopting that Swamp known as Broomley Lake, as a Water Scheme

It is much to be regretted that the late Council allowed themselves to be involved in such a scheme, which had to be rejected; and has already incurred the ratepayers in such heavy expense. Had the late Council, in the first instance, openly discussed it with their Sanitary Officials, such a scheme would never have been countenanced. Instead, everything was carried out in so secretive a manner, that even particulars of gaugings and analyses when asked for by their M.O.H. were withheld for four months, when, the M.O.H. was compelled to refer to the Ministry of Health, before obtaining them.

The Ministry ordered the reports to be furnished to the M.O.H. and asked him to give his views on the Scheme in a report to the Ministry.

As M.O.H. I reported adversely and suggested a supply from springs in the district. These have proved to be ample and a Springs' Water Scheme has now been adopted by the present Council and is awaiting confirmation after the Ministry have considered the Inquiry and gone carefully into other additional facts in possession of their Inspector, Mr. Neilson. It is a great pity that these Inspectors cannot be invited down in an advisory capacity in the first instance. No "dud" schemes could then hope to pass. Time, and large sums of money would be saved, and the ratepayers would retain confidence. We are all impressed by the capable manner in which the Inspectors of the Ministry handle their facts and immediately grasp the essential points of a scheme.

After the First Inquiry, the Ministry's Inspector (Mr. Gardner) visited the Broomley Lake and, irrespective of alternate schemes or quality of water, soon satisfied all that were there that such a scheme was likely to cost much more than a small town such as Haltwhistle in a distressed area could bear. A cost indeed which was more like a town the size of Carlisle or Newcastle.

To save further expense, I pointed out the ample spring water which was available in the district, but it was difficult to remove the false impression that Broomley Lake was a spring water lake instead of actually a shallow, dirty swamp, deficient in spring water. In spite of warning, the Ministry accepted the insufficient facts of the biassed deputation summoned to the Ministry, and actually sanctioned the scheme.

It was about time we took a stand. We called a Public Protest Meeting and were backed up by all the principal land owners and the general public in a record overflow meeting, where hundreds were unable to gain admission. The Meeting called on the Council to consider the Spring Water Scheme and resolved that a plebiscite would be taken if they persisted in the Lake Scheme.

The late Council gave in under this pressure of Public Opinion and agreed to postpone the scheme for another year to go thoroughly into the question of spring water. This has been done and has only gone to confirm the certainty, as to ample spring water being available for the whole district.

The fact that Electric Power is now available, and the efficiency and economy of the Electric Pump; has simplified matters. We can ignore the objections of the Riparian Owners and can pump spring water if necessary to a head wherever we may need it.

At the same time, I regret the frivolous objections of the Riparian Owners, as I would have preferred a Gravitation Scheme throughout. The objectors remind me of "the dog in the manger." I feel they have stood in their own light. I can only leave them to R.I.P.

VACCINATION.

In view of present day knowledge I have, for the last few years, advised parents to claim exemption from vaccination for their children.

This enables them to carry out vaccination when required. The point that immunity is conferred for only a few years, is not lost sight of. All are advised to be vaccinated if going abroad, about to enter the Services, or Hospitals, or before proceeding to infected areas or during epidemics.

It is pointed out that where smallpox infections are endemic it would be well to be re-vaccinated every four or five years. The substitution of Anti-catarrhal Vaccines, instead of Vaccination against Smallpox, before school age, seems to hold out a promise of greater benefit, though I do not suggest such should be compulsory.

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE.

I strongly advise that a patient have the free choice of his or her own doctor. Any other system is most unfair. In Haltwhistle, my colleague and I both hold "Poor Law Appointments." I would prefer that my colleague attended his own patients in my area, as I would prefer to attend my patients who happen to reside in his area. Surely this could be arranged.

HOUSING.

Number of Inhabited Houses at end of 1937	2,250
Number of New Houses built in 1937	...
	34

	2,284

Inspection and reconditioning work under the Housing Acts has proceeded satisfactorily during the year. A further 44 houses have been condemned, following upon an Inquiry held by an Inspector of the Ministry.

During the past year, the Council have completed the erection of the first 27 houses built as the result of the first Housing Inquiry, and have commenced the erection of a further 83, in order to cope with displaced tenants, overcrowding, etc. A further Inquiry into suggested Clearance Areas is pending.

DRAINAGE and SEWERAGE.

Haltwhistle.

This year has seen the completion of the New Sewage Disposal Works designed to meet the needs of Haltwhistle proper, and marks a big improvement on conditions previously existing.

The necessary plans, etc., are in course of preparation for the treatment of the Sewage from Thorngrafton, Westwood, Bardon Mill, Redburn, Tow House and Melkridge (pending the settlement of the proposed Water Scheme), and also for Greenhead, Longbyre and Slaggyford.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

Conversion to Water Closets	...	...	—
Additional Water Closets	...	...	1
New Houses—Water Closets	...	...	15
New Houses—Privies	...	...	9

PUBLIC CLEANSING.

Fully half of the population of the District being concentrated in Haltwhistle, this is the only Parish in the District which has any recognised system of scavenging. This work is done by contract. A suggestion has been made that this work might be done by the Council direct and arrangements be made in addition for the collection of refuse from other villages in the vicinity. This is under consideration.

Elsewhere in the District, private arrangements are made for the removal of house refuse.

HOUSING STATISTICS.

Housing (Consolidated) Regulations, 1925.

Houses erected during the year—

(a)	By Local Authority	...	...	—
(b)	By other Bodies or Persons	...	...	7

1.—Inspection of Dwelling Houses during the year :

(1)	(a)	Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)...	...	...	725
	(b)	Number of inspections made for the purpose			958
(2)	(a)	Number of dwelling houses (included under sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925	...	...	561
	(b)	Number of inspections made for that purpose			725
(3)		Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	...		64
(4)		Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	...	...	438

2.—Remedy of Defects without Service of Formal Notices :

Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by Local Authority or its officers	41
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3.—Action under Statutory Powers :

(A)—Proceedings under Sections 9, 10, and 16 of the
Housing Act, 1936.

(1)	Number of dwelling houses in respect of which “notices” were served requiring repairs	...	—
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(2)	Number of dwelling houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices :—	...	—
(a)	By Owners	...	—
(b)	By Local Authority in default of owners	...	—

(B)—Proceedings under Public Health Acts :—

(1)	Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	...	...	...	—
(2)	Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices :—				
(a)	By Owners	...	...	...	—
(b)	By Local Authority in default of owners				—

(C) Proceedings under Sections 11 and 13 of Housing Act, 1936.

(1)	Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	...	—
(2)	Number of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders	...	—

(D) Proceedings under Section 12 of the Housing Act, 1936.

(1)	Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made	...	...	...	1
(2)	Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit	...	...	...	—

4. Number of Houses Permanently Discontinued as Dwellings and not included above ... 6

Houses secured for Demolition following upon an inquiry by the Ministry's Inspector	...	44
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SANITARY INSPECTIONS OF THE AREA.

Summary.

Water	382
General Inspections	77
Sewers	...	...	...	...	26
New Buildings	...	...	...	...	49
Council's Sewers	...	...	...	...	133
Private Drains	...	...	...	...	185
Bakeries and Shops	...	...	...	...	79
Rooms Disinfected	...	...	...	...	16
Privies Constructed	...	...	...	...	—
New Drains	...	...	...	...	48
Drains Tested	...	...	...	...	43
Cowsheds and Dairies	...	...	...	...	35
Housing	...	...	...	...	164

**Inspection of Factories, Workshops
and Workplaces.**

Inspections made by Sanitary Inspector :—

Premises	Number of		
	Inspections	Written Notices.	Occupiers Prosecuted
Factories (including Laundries)	12	0	0
Workshops (including Workshop Laundries)	18	0	0
Workplaces (other than Outworkers Premises)	0	0	0
	—	—	—
Total	30	0	0

**Defects found in Factories, Workshops
and Workplaces.**

	Found Remedied	
Sanitary Accommodation Insufficient	0	0
Want of Cleanliness ...	0	0
	—	—
	0	0

Prevalence of, and Control over, Infectious and other Diseases.

There was 1 case of Scarlet Fever notified in 1937 and 1 case of Diphtheria.

Disinfection was carried out in 6 instances following upon Tuberculosis and other diseases.

Number of rooms disinfected — 16.

Longtown Isolation Hospital.

Returns for the Year, 1937.

Patients.				Total
Remaining 31st December, 1936—				
Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	—
Diphtheria ...	...	...	...	—
Admitted 1937				
Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	1
Diphtheria ...	...	...	...	1
Remaining 31st December, 1937—				
Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	—
Diphtheria ...	...	...	...	—
Average stay of Patients in days	...	...	...
Daily average of occupied beds	...	...	...

General Provisions of Health Services for the Area.

Laboratory Facilities	County Lab., Newburn.
Ambulance Facilities,—only for Infectious Diseases	Longtown Isolation Hospital.
Nursing 	In association with War Memorial Hospital, Haltwhistle.
Clinics 	Tuberculosis Clinic, 10 a.m. Tuesday, Hexham.
	Ante-Natal—alternate Thursdays Haltwhistle.
	War Memorial Hospital Annex.
Hospital—Public and Voluntary	War Memorial Hospital, Haltwhistle.

Specialist Surgeon from Newcastle operates every
Wednesday or when emergency arises.

Inspection and Supervision of Food.

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Registered Cowkeepers and Dairymen	...	226
Number of Inspections	35
Number of Statutory Notices served on Occupiers respecting unfit Cowsheds	—
Number of Informal Notices served	...	3
Number of Cowsheds Remodelled	...	2
Submitted following service of Notice	...	1

There is in the District one producer of Accredited Milk.

Numerous Cowsheds in this District require improvement and these are receiving attention.

Food Inspection.

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Unsound Food.

Surrendered—Beef (Home-killed)	...	36 Stones
Surrendered—Mutton (Home-killed)	...	Nil
Seized	Nil

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The County Council are the Authority for the purposes
of the Food and Drugs Acts in this District.

Summary of Work Effected.

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Sanitary Conveniences.

		After Letter or Interview	After Informal Notice	After Statutory Notice.	TOTAL
Privies abolished	...	—	9	...	9
Privies repaired...	...	—	13	...	13
Privy ashpits abolished	...	—	—	—	—
Privy ashpits roofed or repaired		4	—	—	—
Pail-closets abolished	...	—	—	—	—
Water-closets provided	...	—	1	—	40
Water-closets repaired	...	13	65	—	78
Sanitary bins provided	...	—	58	—	58
Sanitary bins renewed	...	—	6	—	6

Drainage.

New drains constructed	...	—	—	—	48
Drains repaired or reconstructed		—	14	—	14
Additional gullies provided		31	—	—	31
Old gullies replaced	...	4	—	—	4
Scullery sinks provided	...	7	—	—	7
Scullery waste-pipes repaired		—	—	—	—
Scullery waste-pipes trapped		—	—	—	—
Yards repaired or reconstructed		—	5	—	5

Sanitary Inspector's Annual Report: Year ending December 31st, 1937.

	No. of Inspections during year.	No. of Defects or Contraventi's of Bye-laws.	No. out- standing from previous year	TOTAL.	No. remedied after letter or interview	No. of Informal Notices served.	Defects remedied thereafter	No. of Statutory Notices served	Defects remedied thereafter	In progress or being dealt with.	Legal Proceedings
Housing.											
Structural Defects	272	4	310	586	...	172	191	...	...	...	...
Defective Food-store	98	59	108	265	...	75	25	...	...	...	...
Dampness	138	34	145	317	...	120	35	...	...	...	...
Overcrowding	...	...	130	130	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nuisances	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Water Supply.											
Insufficient	60	48	39	87	...	53	11	...	...	...	...
Unsatisfactory	...	3	31	34	...	4	...	...	...	...	...
Drainage.											
Insufficient	302	74	29	103	5	57	2	...	...	...	...
Defective	...	164	151	315	...	145	64	...	...	...	...
Sanitary Conveniences.											
Insufficient	255	40	35	75	...	49	21	...	...	...	...
Defective	...	160	104	264	...	111	41	...	...	...	...
Shops, Food Stores, etc	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops	35	...	...	35	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Slaughter Houses	79	...	...	79	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Tents, Vans, etc.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Offensive Trades	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Workshops & Workplaces	8	...	...	8	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Keeping of Animals	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Insanitary Ashpits and Receptacles	53	52	92	197	...	46	24	...	...	...	...
Ashpits Improperly Used	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Offensive Accumulations	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Smoke Nuisances	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Petrol Stores	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total	1205	638	1174	2495	5	832	414	...	...	...	...

